

Suspect aggression and victim resistance in multiple perpetrator rapes

Woodhams, Jessica; Cooke, Claire

DOI:

[10.1007/s10508-013-0136-7](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-013-0136-7)

License:

None: All rights reserved

Document Version

Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):

Woodhams, J & Cooke, C 2013, 'Suspect aggression and victim resistance in multiple perpetrator rapes', *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, vol. 42, no. 8, pp. 1509-1516. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-013-0136-7>

[Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal](#)

Publisher Rights Statement:

The final publication is available at Springer via <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10508-013-0136-7>

Checked March 2016

General rights

Unless a licence is specified above, all rights (including copyright and moral rights) in this document are retained by the authors and/or the copyright holders. The express permission of the copyright holder must be obtained for any use of this material other than for purposes permitted by law.

- Users may freely distribute the URL that is used to identify this publication.
- Users may download and/or print one copy of the publication from the University of Birmingham research portal for the purpose of private study or non-commercial research.
- User may use extracts from the document in line with the concept of 'fair dealing' under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (?)
- Users may not further distribute the material nor use it for the purposes of commercial gain.

Where a licence is displayed above, please note the terms and conditions of the licence govern your use of this document.

When citing, please reference the published version.

Take down policy

While the University of Birmingham exercises care and attention in making items available there are rare occasions when an item has been uploaded in error or has been deemed to be commercially or otherwise sensitive.

If you believe that this is the case for this document, please contact UBIRA@lists.bham.ac.uk providing details and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate.

Suspect Aggression and Victim Resistance in Multiple Perpetrator Rapes

Jessica Woodhams¹² and Claire Cooke³

This is the accepted version of a paper published in Archives of Sexual Behavior in November 2013. The DOI for this article is 10.1007/s10508-013-0136-7. The final publication is available at link.springer.com at <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10508-013-0136-7>.

This study was conducted with the assistance of a research grant from the Nuffield Foundation's Social Science Small Grants Scheme (SGS/35341), which was awarded to the first author. The first author would like to acknowledge the supervision of Professors Hollin and Bull for a pilot study, which was conducted prior to this study as part of her doctoral thesis.

¹ School of Psychology, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.

² To whom correspondence should be addressed at School of Psychology, Frankland Building, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK. Email: j.woodhams@bham.ac.uk.

³ School of Natural and Social Sciences, University of Gloucestershire, Cheltenham, UK.

ABSTRACT

Several research studies have reported an elevated level of aggression in rapes committed by multiple perpetrators compared to rapes committed by lone suspects. Several factors that have been linked to elevated aggression in generic samples of rape were examined for the first time with a sample of multiple perpetrator rapes. Factors that might be associated with victim resistance were also investigated. Victim and offender characteristics, as well as the behaviors displayed by victims and offenders, were extracted from the police files of 89 multiple perpetrator stranger rapes perpetrated against female victims in the United Kingdom. These behaviors were rated for their level of suspect (non-sexual) aggression and victim resistance, respectively. Degree of victim resistance was significantly and positively associated with suspect aggression. Older victims were the recipients of significantly higher levels of suspect aggression. Victims who were incapacitated from drugs and/or alcohol were less likely to be the recipients of suspect aggression. Group leaders displayed more aggression towards the victim than the followers in the groups. The number of perpetrators was significantly related to the degree of resistance displayed by the victim with offences perpetrated by fewer suspects being characterized by more victim resistance. Research regarding cognitive appraisal during criminal interactions and the respective roles of offenders is referred to in considering these relationships.

KEY WORDS: group rape, gang rape, survivor, offender, violence

INTRODUCTION

Sexual offences by multiple perpetrators are referred to by many terms, including “group rape,” “gang rape,” and “multiple perpetrator rape.” Recently, Horvath and Kelly (2009) presented a convincing argument for adoption of the last term, which is subsequently used throughout this article. In the United Kingdom, the Sexual Offences Act (2003) defines rape as the intentional penetration of the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with a penis without his/her consent. However, the international research outlined in this article does not solely pertain to acts that would fit this definition. The term “rape” or “sexual assault” is used in this article when describing specific studies where appropriate; however, “multiple perpetrator rape” (MPR) is used to refer to a range of sexual offences committed by two or more perpetrators for the sake of brevity.

Sexual offences characterized by the threat of harm, physical violence, and more invasive forced sexual activity are associated with greater trauma for the victim (Resnick, 1993; Sales, Baum, & Shore, 1984). Since MPRs more often possess these characteristics compared to lone perpetrator rapes (LPRs), they hold greater potential for victim harm, making them an important phenomenon for research attention. Despite this, there is a paucity of research on MPR (Horvath & Kelly, 2009; Porter & Alison, 2001).

Aggression in Multiple Perpetrator Rape

A few studies have compared LPRs vs. MPRs in terms of the level and types of aggression used by perpetrators. These studies sampled offences committed by adult offenders in the United Kingdom ($N = 297$, Wright & West, 1981), the United States ($N = 983$, Ullman, 2007a), and offences committed by juveniles in the United Kingdom ($N = 495$, Woodhams, 2004). Hauffe and Porter (2009) collated an international sample of 120 cases from the United

Kingdom, the United States, and Israel. These studies reported MPRs to more often involve violence (especially gratuitous violence), the use of multiple weapons, and penetration (vaginal, oral, and anal). Various theories from social psychology, including deindividuation, norm enhancement, modeling, and groupthink, have been used to explain the differences in aggression in LPRs vs. MPRs (Harkins & Dixon, 2010; Woodhams, Gillett, & Grant, 2007). However, studies have also observed variation in suspect aggression *within* MPRs (Porter & Alison, 2004).

The few studies that exist which describe violence and aggression used *within* samples of MPRs reported perpetrators engaging in a range of aggressive behaviors from verbal aggression to extreme acts of violence, mutilation, and murder (Bijleveld, Weerman, Looije, & Hendriks, 2007; Hauffe & Porter, 2009; Porter & Alison, 2006). Specific examples of violent acts in MPR included punching, strangulation, shooting, bludgeoning, stabbing, slapping, and kicking (Porter & Alison, 2006). Although they did not report the types of aggression used by the offenders in their sample, Horvath and Kelly (2009) found just fewer than half of their victims were injured, with 6% being severely injured. In terms of weapon use, Porter and Alison reported a weapon being used in approximately half of the offences they sampled. Most often the weapon was used to control the victim, but, in one-quarter of offences, the victim was injured with it.

Exactly how and to what extent perpetrators of MPR harm and threaten their victims can be seen to vary considerably. There are a number of variables that could explain this observed variation, including offender characteristics, victim characteristics, and the way the offence was committed.

Victim and Suspect Characteristics and Suspect Aggression

Both victim age and suspect age have previously been investigated for their association with suspect aggression. Woodhams (2004) and Woodhams et al. (2007) did not find a

relationship between suspect age and violence in their sample of LPRs and MPRs. For victim age, the research findings have been mixed, with some generic studies of sexual offences reporting a relationship between victim age and suspect violence (Hunter, Hazelwood, & Slesinger, 2000; Långström, Grann, & Lindblad, 2000; Muram, Hostetler, Jones, & Speck, 1995), yet others not (Woodhams, 2004; Woodhams et al., 2007). However, Woodhams et al. (2007) did find a significant interaction of victim age *and* victim gender, whereby younger females and older males were most often the recipients of physical violence. Currently, it is unknown what effect victim and suspect age could have on the aggression displayed in MPRs by suspects. Further, their potential effect on victim resistance has not previously been investigated. In the current study, no hypotheses were, therefore, stipulated in advance but the potential for relationships was explored.

Victim Resistance and Suspect Aggression in MPR

A recent qualitative study of victim behavior within MPR noted the considerable range of behaviors in which victims engaged to resist the offenders (Woodhams, Hollin, Bull, & Cooke, 2012). Researchers have investigated whether physical aggression (including presence of a weapon) in rape resulted from victim resistance. Offender aggression displayed in response to victim resistance would be considered a form of instrumental aggression (Feshbach, 1964). Some studies found no relationship between victim resistance and suspect violence with offences committed by both lone (Hazelwood, Reboussin, & Warren, 1989) and multiple perpetrators (Wright & West, 1981), whereas one study with juveniles (Hunter et al., 2000) found physical violence to be related to how difficult the victim was to control. However, Hunter et al. found evidence of more gratuitous violence in their sample, that is, violence that was not associated

with victim behavior. This was particularly associated with juveniles who were more often offending as a group.

Recently, Chambers, Horvath, and Kelly (2010) described MPRs from the United Kingdom where physical and verbal hostility was directed at the victim after rape completion, therefore serving no facilitative function. Furthermore, a South African study of MPR (Wood, 2005) reported victims being “punished” using violence for a perceived slight or for being too confident. Both studies suggested that, at least in some MPRs, aggression was not always a response to victim resistance.

In summary, findings from studies of the relationship between victim resistance and suspect aggression are mixed and these include studies that have incorporated MPRs in the sample (Wright & West, 1981). Reports of gratuitous violence in MPRs suggest that, if a relationship between victim resistance and suspect aggression in MPRs does exist, it may not be strong. It was, therefore, hypothesized that there would be a relationship between victim resistance and suspect aggression, but that it would not necessarily be of large magnitude.

Group Size and Suspect Aggression

If suspect aggression in MPR only served an instrumental purpose, in terms of facilitating the sexual assault, less aggression should be needed the greater the number of perpetrators present (Woodhams et al., 2007). Suspect aggression should decrease as group size increases. However, despite there seeming to be such a relationship when comparing LPRs vs. MPRs, no such relationship was found *within* one sample of MPRs (Horvath & Kelly, 2009). However, this is the only published study to have investigated this relationship and it focused on victim injury (a proxy for offender aggression) rather than offender aggression *per se*. Based on these previous findings, it was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between group size and suspect

aggression with larger groups using less aggression. However, observations of gratuitous violence in MPRs would, again, make a large effect size unlikely.

Group Size, Rape Type, and Victim Resistance

If a larger group can control a victim with greater ease, it follows that less victim resistance should be expected for MPRs committed by larger groups. However, the concept of group is thought to be associated with an expectation of hostility (Meier & Hinsz, 2004), in which case, when faced with more offenders, a victim may be more likely to fight and fight more vigorously. However, Luckenbill's (1981) study of how offenders and victims interacted in robbery would suggest that victims of MPR are likely to perceive perpetrators as having greater punitive resources at their disposal the larger their number and, as a result, would more likely comply with the offenders' wishes when faced with a larger group.

This relationship might be further complicated by the way the rape unfolds. Woodhams (2008) noted that some MPRs were committed in the presence of all offenders, termed "simultaneous rapes," whereas for others the victim was contained within an enclosed space and raped by each offender one at a time, termed a "sequential rape." Clearly, in these different circumstances, the actual group size does not correspond with the number of perpetrators present to physically restrain the victim. It follows that victim resistance may vary depending on whether an MPR is perpetrated in a simultaneous or sequential manner. Within MPRs, it is, therefore, unclear whether greater victim resistance would be associated with a larger number of offenders or not. In the current study, no hypotheses were stipulated in advance regarding group size or rape type (sequential vs. simultaneous); instead, potential relationships with victim resistance were explored.

Substance Use, Victim Resistance, and Suspect Aggression

Both victim resistance and suspect aggression have been found to decrease with increasing alcohol consumption in general samples of sexual assault and rape (Abbey, Clinton, McAuslan, Zawacki, & Buck, 2002; Ullman, 2007b). If the victim was incapacitated through alcohol (or drugs), offenders would require less, if any, violence to complete the rape; however, Ullman (2007b) has also argued that these relationships need further investigation. The potential differences in the dynamics of MPRs compared to LPRs mean that these factors also warrant specific investigation with a sample of MPRs. It was hypothesized that rapes where victims were incapacitated by substances would be characterized by less suspect aggression and less victim resistance than those where substances did not feature.

Aggression and Status within the Group

Although yet to receive empirical scrutiny, group dynamics are suspected to play a role in the emergence of violence and aggression within MPR, and it is thought that they might also result in the differential use of aggression by individual perpetrators within the same group. Some researchers have highlighted the importance of the leader in organizing and facilitating MPRs (Amir, 1971; Blanchard, 1959; Groth & Birnbaum, 1990). Specifically, the leader is the first to physically assault the victim (Amir, 1971), and they have been proposed to be more violent towards the victim (Franklin, 2004). Within MPRs where there is a clear leader, these individuals might, therefore, engage in more extreme acts of aggression compared to their “followers.” It was, therefore, hypothesized that there would be a significant difference in the amount of aggression displayed by leaders and followers⁴.

METHOD

Sample

⁴ This comparison, and the comparison of duos versus groups of 3+ members, was conducted following feedback received from reviewers during the review process.

Police case files on 89 multiple perpetrator stranger rapes committed by 240 male suspects against 89 female victims were provided to the authors by the Serious Crime Analysis Section (SCAS) of the Serious and Organised Crime Agency, United Kingdom. SCAS is a police analytical unit with national responsibility to carry out analytical work on behalf of all police forces. SCAS collates and analyzes information on serious crimes that fulfil its criteria, predominately stranger murders and serious sexual assaults and/or rapes. This unit holds the most comprehensive collection of police files regarding cases of stranger sexual assault in the United Kingdom. The cases analyzed represented a national sample of cases spread across the United Kingdom and were the most recent cases on the SCAS database. Data were collected through examination of the police files. Files contained a variety of sources of information about the offence. For 42 cases, the source of information about the offence was the victim statement and for 37 cases it was a record of the victim's interview written by the interviewing officers. Interview transcripts were the source of information for three cases and for four cases the actual DVD recording of the victim's interview was viewed. In two cases, both a DVD and the record of interview were available, and, in one case, there was both a case summary prepared for the Crown Prosecution Service and the record of the victim's interview.

Victims

All victims were female. For most of the allegations, the victim's relationship with all suspects was a stranger relationship (92%). For the remainder, the victim was a stranger to at least one suspect. In terms of victim ethnicity, 87% of victims were White, 3% Black African/Caribbean, and for 10% of victims their ethnicity was not recorded. With regards to age, this was unknown for two allegations. The median victim age was 22 years but ages ranged from 13-55 years.

Offenders

All offenders were male. Group size ranged from two to seven suspects, with most being duos (52%). For 66% of rapes, the suspects' ethnicities were homogenous across the group. Most were White (37%), followed by Black African/Caribbean (14%), Asian (12%), Arabian (2%), and Oriental (1%). Fifteen per cent of groups were composed of mixed ethnicities. For 6% of the rapes, the suspects' ethnicity was unknown for the entire group and, for the remaining 14%, not all ethnicities of the suspects were known. Of those offences where the suspect and victim ethnicities were known ($n = 72$), 43% involved victims and groups of suspects of the same ethnicity.

Calculating suspect ages was complicated due to variations in the way age was reported in the police files. In some cases, an estimated but exact age was given, whereas in other cases an age range was specified, or a verbal description, such as "early 20s," was given. For statistical calculations, the latter two scenarios required some estimation from the data. Where an age range was given, the mid-point was used for the suspect's age. Where a description was given, the phrase was first converted into an age range and then the mid-point of the age range was recorded. For example, "early 20s" was numerically coded as 22.5 years, "mid-20s" as 25 years, and "late 20s" as 27.5 years. Once each suspect had been allocated an estimated age, the mean age for the group was calculated. The suspects' ages were not recorded for the entire group in 13 cases. The mean ages of the group members ranged from 16–40 years with the mean group age being 26 years.

Procedure

Demographic data and information about the victim and suspect behaviors were extracted from case files. Each offence was examined and each victim and suspect behavior was coded.

The suspects' behaviors were rated for level of non-sexual aggression using a Likert scale from 0 (no aggression) to 6 (extreme aggression). When coding a suspect behavior for level of aggression, it was considered that aggression could be communicated verbally or physically. The victim behaviors were rated for level of resistance in a similar manner. Resistance could be verbal, physical, or could involve no action (e.g., where the offender requested a sexual act and the victim ignored the request). Degree of resistance was conceptualized as how forcefully and directly the victim communicated her intention to not comply with the suspects' wishes. Once all the behaviors in an offence had been coded for victim resistance and suspect aggression, an overall score for the offence was calculated. The highest score attributed for aggression and resistance in each offence was used as the overall score of aggression and resistance, respectively.⁵ The same approach was adopted for calculating the level of aggression used by each suspect. When allocating each suspect a score for aggression, there were occasions when an act of aggression could not be attributed to a specific individual by the victim. This happened for several reasons, including the sheer number of suspects assaulting the victim at any one time or due to memory loss. In such circumstances, suspects were only attributed scores for their aggression where acts could be definitely attributed to them.

In a previous study (Woodhams, Cooke, Harkins, & da Silva, 2012), the suspects in the sample had been categorized as leaders, followers or neither based on their scores on the Scale of Influence measure (Porter & Alison, 2001), combined with their relative use of directives (a speech act whereby the offender directs the victim or a co-offender to do or not do something).

⁵ An alternative method would have been to sum all the scores for victim resistance (or suspect aggression) to create a total resistance (or aggression) score. However, a total score could be affected by the quality of victim interviewing and statement-taking, as well as victim memory. A further method would be to calculate the mean resistance or aggression score, however, by using such an approach, one rape containing one brutal act of violence (or one highly resistant behavior) could have the same mean score as an offence which involved several moderate acts of aggression (or resistance). For these reasons, it was preferable to use the highest aggression and resistance value for each offence.

Using these categorizations, those suspects designated as leaders were compared for their level of aggression to those designated as followers. It should be noted that use of aggression was not included in the allocation of a role to a suspect.

The inter-rater reliability of the coding of suspect aggression and victim resistance was assessed with 18 cases (20% of the sample). Using the absolute agreement method, the intra-class correlation (ICC) was 0.96 for victim resistance and 0.99 for suspect aggression representing substantial levels of inter-rater reliability (Diamond, Mueller, Delitto, & Sinacore, 1989). Since some analyses reported below utilized the individual suspects' aggression scores, a third ICC was calculated. At 0.98, this also represented a substantial level of agreement.

Statistical Analysis

The distributions of the two dependent variables, suspect aggression and victim resistance, were significantly different to a normal distribution as determined by Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. Medians and ranges, Spearman's rho correlations, and Mann-Whitney *U* tests were, therefore, calculated. The effect size *r* was also computed. For the Mann-Whitney *U* tests, *r* was approximated using z / \sqrt{N} (Pallant, 2007).

RESULTS

Offence Characteristics

The median victim resistance score was 5 (range = 0-6) and the median suspect aggression score was 4 (range = 0-6). In 15% of the rapes sampled, the victim had been incapacitated through the administration of alcohol and/or drugs. Most of the suspects (67%) raped the victim simultaneously. In 21% of cases, the victim was raped in a sequential manner. One group engaged in both types of rape. For 10% of the allegations, there was insufficient information to determine with confidence whether the rape was sequential or simultaneous. This

was often the case where the victim was incapacitated due to alcohol and/or drugs, as the victim either could not remember the act of rape or her memory was incomplete. Fifteen per cent of the rapes involved the use of a weapon either to harm or threaten the victim.

Factors Associated with Victim Resistance

Victim age, suspect (group) age, level of suspect aggression, number of suspects, whether the victim was assaulted by a duo or a group consisting of 3+ offenders (duo vs. 3+ group), presence of a weapon (yes or no), rape type (sequential vs. simultaneous), and whether the victim was incapacitated through alcohol and/or drugs (yes or no) were investigated for their relationship with victim resistance.

There was a significant difference between the level of resistance displayed by victims raped by suspects simultaneously compared to those raped sequentially (see Table 1). This difference represented a small-medium effect size (Cohen, 1988). Victims of a simultaneous rape displayed significantly more resistance. Number of suspects and level of suspect aggression had a significant relationship with level of victim resistance (see Table 2). A larger group size was significantly associated with less victim resistance representing a small-medium effect size. When the groups were divided into duos vs. those containing 3+ members, a significant difference in victim resistance was also found. Victims raped by 3+ groups were significantly less resistant than those raped by duos with a small-medium effect size. Finally, greater suspect aggression was significantly associated with greater victim resistance, representing a small-medium effect size.

Factors Associated with Suspect Aggression

Victim age, suspect (group) age, number of suspects, group size (duo vs. 3+ group members), rape type (sequential vs. simultaneous), and whether the victim was incapacitated

(yes or no), were investigated for their relationship with suspect aggression. In addition, the level of aggression used by offenders identified as leaders compared to those identified as followers was compared.

As shown in Tables 2 and 3, rapes where the victim was incapacitated (through drugs and/or alcohol) were associated with significantly less suspect aggression, representing a medium-large effect size. The difference in suspect aggression used by offenders who raped the victim sequentially compared to simultaneously approached significance ($p = .056$), with a small-medium effect size. A significant, positive relationship was observed between victim age and suspect aggression. Older victims were the recipients of more brutal acts of aggression. This relationship represented a medium effect size.⁶ Leaders used a significantly greater level of aggression than followers, representing a small-medium effect.

DISCUSSION

This study investigated factors associated with suspect aggression and victim resistance in MPRs. In terms of the nature of MPR, there were similarities between this sample and those of existing studies. Points of departure were that the average suspect age was older than reported previously (Bijleveld et al., 2007; Hauffe & Porter, 2009; Horvath & Kelly, 2009), and there was not an over-representation of ethnic minority offenders in the sample, contrary to previous studies (Bijleveld et al., 2007; Horvath & Kelly, 2009).

The median resistance score was 5 out of a possible 6; therefore, most victims displayed a relatively high level of resistance at some stage of the rape. However, there was variation across MPRs as indicated by resistance scores ranging from 0 to 6. The median rating for suspect aggression was 4 out of a possible 6; however, again, the full range of scores was present in the

⁶ It should be noted that the difference in victim age between offences where the victim was incapacitated and where they were not was non-significant ($U = 463.50$, $z = -.21$).

sample with some suspects displaying no aggressive behaviors and others displayed extreme acts of violence.

The ways in which offender, victim and offence characteristics might affect the level of victim resistance within MPRs had rarely been investigated prior to this study. Three of the variables investigated had a significant impact on victim resistance (group size, rape type, and suspect aggression). Larger group size was significantly associated with less victim resistance, which would suggest that, like Luckenbill's (1981) victims of robbery, the rape victims in our sample were cognitively appraising the resources available to the suspects and noting their superior numbers. However, victim resistance was greater when the victim was raped simultaneously, and thus in the presence of more group members, than when raped sequentially. This finding may reflect Meier and Hinz's (2004) proposition that the physical presence of a group can produce expectations of hostility. Therefore, in the current sample, when confronted with all group members together, the victim anticipated greater hostility and resisted more vigorously. In the current sample, how the rape unfolded appeared more important in determining victim resistance than group size *per se*.

Offences characterized by more victim resistance were also characterized by more suspect aggression. This relationship mirrored those reported in previous studies of sexual and non-sexual crime (Bachman & Carmody, 1994; Block & Skogan, 1986; Cohen, 1984; Hunter et al., 2000; Prentky, Burgess, & Carter, 1986), but contrasted with others (Hazelwood et al., 1989; Ullman & Knight, 1993; Wright & West, 1981). In his study of robbery interactions, Luckenbill (1981) noted that when offenders used excessive aggression, the victims resisted more fervently, perceiving that the offender was unlikely to interact with them in a rational manner. Previous studies that have reported gratuitous violence in MPRs (e.g., Hunter et al., 2000) indicated that it

was likely that a similar relationship was being observed here. However, other findings in the current study suggested that MPR offenders were also using aggression in an instrumental manner. For example, aggression was significantly less likely in offences where the victim had already been incapacitated through drugs or alcohol. Similarly, Du Mont et al. (2009) found victims of suspected drug-facilitated sexual assaults were less likely to report the use of a weapon in the offence. Future research utilizing interviews with offenders could investigate the relationship between victim incapacitation and offender preferences for interacting with a passive vs. active victim.

One explanation for why the relationship between suspect aggression and victim resistance was not strong in magnitude comes from research by Fritzson and Ridgway (2001) and Luckenbill (1981). In their study of attempted murder, Fritzson and Ridgway argued that the offender's perception of the victim as a person, an object, or a vehicle for negative emotion affected their response to victim resistance. Offenders who perceived the victim as a person responded to resistance with verbal coercion, whereas offenders who viewed the victim as a vehicle responded with extreme aggression. Similarly, Luckenbill observed that offenders who perceived the victim as necessary for the successful commission of the robbery were less likely to commence the offence by using incapacitating force. Future research adopting a qualitative approach to offender decision-making could investigate if similar perceptions or goals are driving the use of aggression in MPR.

Older victims were the recipients of more severe acts of aggression. This replicated the findings of Hunter et al. (2000), Muram et al. (1995), and Långström et al. (2000), but with a sample composed entirely of MPRs. This relationship was not attributable to younger victims more often being incapacitated or the relative use of resistance by older and younger victims.

Practitioners working with MPR offenders have highlighted the significance of the leader's role with some speculating that, without the influence of the leaders, some MPRs would not take place (Amir, 1971; Blanchard, 1959; Groth & Birnbaum, 1990). Concerns have also been raised as to the relative risk of re-offending posed by different group members; however, without a reliable means of classifying offenders' roles, this research had been unable to progress (Woodhams, Cooke, da Silva, & Harkins, 2012). Having reliably classified the suspects in the current sample as leaders or followers (see Woodhams, Cooke, da Silva, & Harkins, 2012), it was possible to compare their relative use of aggression for the first time. Leaders, as predicted, displayed more severe acts of aggression towards victims. This finding is highly relevant to the practice of risk assessment with sex offenders. Risk assessment tools (e.g., Sexual Violence Risk-20, Boer, Hart, Kropp, & Webster, 1997) associate greater risk of re-offending with acts of physical harm perpetrated towards victims. It is, therefore, possible that leaders are, in fact, at greater risk of sexual re-offending than followers.

Limitations

The source of information for this study was victim allegations of MPR made to the police. Victim accounts are secondary records of what occurred during a rape and can contain omissions and distortions (Alison, Snook, & Stein, 2001). Myths as to how victims and suspects behave in "real rapes" affect the reporting behavior of victims (Du Mont, Miller, & Myhr, 2003); therefore, this sample was unlikely to reflect the circumstances of all MPRs, particularly those that go unreported. It should also be noted that in rating each offence for its level of aggression and resistance, the raters were not blind to the hypotheses of the study. This was because of the nature of the data access agreement with the police, which limited access to the police files to the two authors of the article. The potential for experimenter bias must, therefore, be recognized.

Conclusions

An array of variables was found to be associated with victims' use of resistance and suspects' use of aggression. These included the type of rape (sequential or simultaneous), whether the victim was incapacitated through drugs/alcohol, group size, victim age, and the suspect's status with the group. A significant relationship was also found between suspect aggression and victim resistance, although this was not large in magnitude. Patterns of resistance and aggression in MPR are likely to result from a complex interplay of cognitive appraisal by the victim and suspects, group dynamics, and attitudes towards the victim. Future studies that can preserve the temporal ordering of victim and suspect behaviors for analysis are needed to fully understand how these variables interact.

REFERENCES

- Abbey, A., Clinton, A. M., McAuslan, P., Zawacki, T., & Buck, P. O. (2002). Alcohol-involved rapes: Are they more violent? *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 26, 99-109.
- Alison, L. J., Snook, B., & Stein, K. L. (2001). Unobtrusive measurement: Using police information for forensic research. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 241-254.
- Amir, M. (1971). *Patterns in forcible rape*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bachman, R., & Carmody, D. C. (1994). Fighting fire with fire: The effects of victim resistance in intimate versus stranger perpetrated assaults against females. *Journal of Family Violence*, 9, 317-331.
- Bijleveld, C. J. H., Weerman, F., Looije, D. & Hendriks, J. (2007). Group sex offending by juveniles: Coercive sex as a group activity. *European Journal of Criminology*, 4, 5-31.
- Blanchard, W. H. (1959). The group process in gang rape. *Journal of Social Psychology*, 49, 259-266.
- Block, R., & Skogan, W. G. (1986). Resistance and nonfatal outcomes in stranger-to-stranger predatory crime. *Violence and Victims*, 1, 241-253.
- Boer, D., Hart, S., Kropp, P., & Webster, C. (1997). *Manual for the Sexual Violence Risk-20*. Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada: The British Columbia Institute Against Family Violence and Simon Fraser University
- Chambers, J., Horvath, M. A. H., & Kelly, L. (2010). A typology of multiple-perpetrator rape. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 37, 114-1139.
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Cohen, P. B. (1984). Resistance during sexual assaults: Avoiding rape and injury. *Victimology*, 9, 120-129.
- Diamond, J. E., Mueller, M. J., Delitto, A., & Sinacore, D. R. (1989). Reliability of a diabetic foot evaluation. *Physical Therapy*, 69, 797-802.
- Du Mont, J., Macdonald, S., Rotbard, N., Asllani, E., Bainbridge, D., & Cohen, M. M. (2009). Factors associated with suspected drug-facilitated sexual assault. *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 180, 513-519.
- Du Mont, J., Miller, K., & Myhr, T. (2003). The role of 'real rape' and 'real victim' stereotypes in the police reporting practices of sexually assaulted women. *Violence Against Women*, 9, 466-486.
- Feshbach, S. (1964). The function of aggression and the regulation of aggressive drive. *Psychological Review*, 71, 257-272.
- Franklin, K. (2004). Enacting masculinity: Antigay violence and group rape as participatory theatre. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 1, 25-40.
- Fritzon, K., & Ridgway, J. (2001). Near-death experience: The role of victim reaction in attempted homicide. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 16, 679-696.
- Groth, A. N., & Birnbaum, H. J. (1990). *Men who rape: The psychology of the offender*. London: Plenum Press.
- Harkins, L., & Dixon, L. (2010). Sexual offending in groups: An examination. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 15, 87-99.
- Hauffe, S., & Porter, L. (2009). An interpersonal comparison of lone and group rape offences. *Psychology, Crime and Law*, 15, 469-491.

- Hazelwood, R. R., Reboussin, R., & Warren, J. (1989). Serial rape: correlates of increased aggression and the relationship of offender pleasure to victim resistance. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 4*, 65-78.
- Horvath, M. A. H., & Kelly, L. (2009). Multiple perpetrator rape: Naming an offence and initial research findings. *Journal of Sexual Aggression, 15*, 83-96.
- Hunter, J. A., Hazelwood, R. R., & Slesinger, D. (2000). Juvenile-perpetrated sex crimes: Patterns of offending and predictors of violence. *Journal of Family Violence, 15*, 81-93.
- Långström, N., Grann, M., & Lindblad, F. (2000). A preliminary typology of young sex offenders. *Journal of Adolescence, 23*, 319–329.
- Luckenbill, D. F. (1981). Generating compliance: The case of robbery. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 10*, 25-46.
- Meier, B. P., & Hinsz, V. B. (2004). A comparison of human aggression committed by groups and individuals: An inter-individual-intergroup discontinuity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 40*, 551-559.
- Muram, D., Hostetler, B. R., Jones, C. E., & Speck, P. M. (1995). Adolescent victims of sexual assault. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 17*, 372–375.
- Pallant, J. (2007). *SPSS survival manual* (3rd ed.). Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Porter, L. E., & Alison, L. J. (2001). A partially ordered scale of influence in violent group behavior: An example from gang rape. *Small Group Research, 32*, 475-497.
- Porter, L. E., & Alison, L. J. (2004). Behavioural coherence in violent group activity: An interpersonal model of sexually violent gang behaviour. *Aggressive Behavior, 30*, 449-468.

- Porter, L. E., & Alison, L. J. (2006). Examining group rape: A descriptive analysis of offender and victim behaviour. *European Journal of Criminology*, 3, 357-381.
- Prentky, R. A., Burgess, A. W., & Carter, D. L. (1986). Victim responses by rapist type: An empirical and clinical analysis. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1, 73-98.
- Resnick, P. (1993). The psychological impact of rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 8, 223-255.
- Sales, E., Baum, M., & Shore, B. (1984). Victim readjustment following assault. *Journal of Social Issues*, 40, 117-136.
- Sexual Offences Act. (2003). *Adults: Safer from sexual crime*. London, UK: The Home Office Communications Directorate.
- Ullman, S. E. (2007a). Comparing gang and individual rapes in a community sample of urban women. *Violence and Victims*, 22, 43-51.
- Ullman, S. E. (2007b). A 10-year update of "Review and critique of empirical studies of rape avoidance." *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34, 411-429.
- Ullman, S. E., & Knight, R. A. (1993). The efficacy on women's resistance strategies in rape situations. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 17, 23-38.
- Wood, K. (2005). Contextualizing group rape in post-apartheid South Africa. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 7, 303-317.
- Woodhams, J. (2004). Characteristics of juvenile sex offending against strangers: Findings from a non-clinical study. *Aggressive Behavior*, 30, 243-253.
- Woodhams, J. (2008). *Juvenile sex offending: An investigative perspective* (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Leicester, Leicester, UK.

- Woodhams, J., Cooke, C., Harkins, L., & da Silva, T. (2012). Leadership in multiple perpetrator stranger rape. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 27*, 728-752.
- Woodhams, J., Gillett, R., & Grant, T. (2007). Understanding the factors that affect the severity of juvenile stranger sex offences: The effect of victim characteristics and number of suspects. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 22*, 218-237.
- Woodhams, J., Hollin, C. R., Bull, R., & Cooke, C. (2012). Behavior displayed by female victims during rapes committed by lone and multiple perpetrators. *Psychology, Public Policy and Law, 18*, 415-452.
- Wright, R., & West, D. J. (1981). Rape—a comparison of group offences and lone assaults. *Medicine, Science and the Law, 21*, 25-30.

Table 1

Tests of Difference for Victim Resistance.

	<i>n</i>	Median (Range)	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>r</i>
Rape Type					
Simultaneous	60	5.00 (.00-6.00)	403.50*	-1.98	.21
Sequential	19	4.00 (.00-6.00)			
Group Size					
Duo	46	5.00 (.00-6.00)	703.50*	-2.26	.24
3+ Group	42	4.00 (.00-6.00)			
Weapon Use					
Yes	13	4.00 (.00-6.00)	421.50	-.87	.09
No	76	5.00 (.00-6.00)			
Incapacitated with Substance					
Yes	13	5.00 (.00-6.00)	424.50	-.83	.09
No	76	5.00 (.00-6.00)			

* $p < .05$

Table 2

Correlations between Factors and Victim Resistance and Suspect Aggression.

	Victim Resistance	Suspect Aggression
	$r_s (N)$	$r_s (N)$
Victim Age	-.07 (87)	.34** (87)
Suspect (Group) Age	-.12 (76)	.04 (76)
Number of Suspects	-.27** (89)	-.09 (89)
Victim Resistance		.24* (89)

* $p < .05$, ** $p \leq .01$

Table 3

Tests of Difference for Suspect Aggression.

	<i>n</i>	Median (Range)	<i>U</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>r</i>
Rape Type					
Simultaneous	60	4.00 (.00-6.00)	418.50	-1.91	.20
Sequential	19	4.00 (.00-5.00)			
Group Size					
Duo	46	4.00 (.00-6.00)	849.50	-1.05	.11
3+ Group	42	4.00 (.00-6.00)			
Incapacitated with Substance					
Yes	13	4.00 (.00-4.00)	172.00**	-4.04	.43
No	76	4.00 (.00-6.00)			
Member Status					
Leader	76	4.00 (.00-6.00)	6154.00**	2.78	.19
Follower	133	4.00 (.00-6.00)			

** $p < .01$